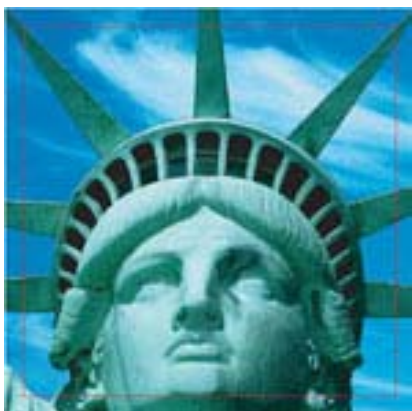


# The Cowrie Creek Chronicle

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## Contact Information For US Citizens in Nigeria:

### Abuja

US Embassy  
Plot 1075, Diplomatic Drive  
Central District Area  
Abuja, Nigeria  
Telephone: 234.9.461.4000  
Fax: 234.9.461.4036  
E-Mail: [Consularabuja@state.gov](mailto:Consularabuja@state.gov)

### Lagos

US Consulate-General  
2 Walter Carrington Crescent  
Victoria Island  
Lagos, Nigeria  
Telephone: 234.1.261.0050  
Fax: 234.1.261.2218  
E-mail: [lagoscons2@state.gov](mailto:lagoscons2@state.gov)



Ambassador Campbell at the U. Ibadan

## Ambassador Campbell Shares Ideas with Nigerians on Democracy, Elections, and Freedom of the Press

Ambassador John Campbell continued his public outreach activities to promote free and fair elections in Nigeria with a lecture at the University of Ibadan on August 8, 2006. In both the lecture itself and at subsequent meetings during his visit to Ibadan, the Ambassador articulated his message clearly: "The United States cares about Nigeria. Our policy is to provide support for democracy and good governance in Nigeria, of which elections is one part, but only at the invitation of Nigerians."

The Ambassador delivered his lecture, titled *Elections: The American Experience* to a large audience of more than 600 students, academics, leaders of non-governmental organizations, heads of business, members of the press, and government officials.

Afterward, the Ambassador took questions and shared comments with several members of the audience who sought to tap into his expertise on subjects including redistricting, the role of women, the popular vote vs. electoral vote in the US, and the role of electoral commissions. The full text of Ambassador Campbell's address is available on the US Embassy's website: <http://abuja.usembassy.gov/>



Dr. Peter M. Lewis at the US Embassy

## US Embassy hosts Johns Hopkins Nigeria specialist

The American Embassy hosted Dr. Peter M. Lewis, Director of the African Studies Program at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies August 20 – 26, 2006 for a series of public lectures and meetings in Lagos and Abuja. Dr. Lewis is an internationally recognized expert on governance and development, African politics, Nigerian politics, democratization, civil society, and economic reform. While in Nigeria Dr. Lewis lectured on "Comparative Importance of Third Elections in Developing New Democracies," met with members of the Nigerian National Assembly and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), and participated in radio and TV interviews.

Dr. Lewis has authored or collaborated on several books focusing on Nigeria, including: *Growing Apart: Oil, Politics and Economic Change in Indonesia and Nigeria* (2006); *Deregulation and the Banking Crisis in Nigeria: A Comparative Study*, co-editor (2002); and *Down to Earth: Changes in Attitudes Toward Democracy and Markets in Nigeria*, co-author (2001), among several others. The full text of his lecture is at <http://abuja.usembassy.gov/>.



### US Department of State News

The US Department of State's Office of Overseas Citizens Services (OCS) works with a wide range of domestic and international organizations to assist American citizen families in the US and abroad. Within OCS, the Office of Children's Issues is responsible for coordinating policies and providing information about international adoption and international parental child abduction.

#### **International Adoption**

The Office of Children's Issues provides information and assistance on the following topics as they relate to foreign adoptions and US immigration law:

- Visa requirements and other US requirements for international adoption
- The Hague Intercountry Adoption Convention & treaty coordination with other countries
- Individual inquiries about the status of adoption cases
- Protection of US citizens from discrimination by foreign authorities or courts

#### **International Parental Child Abduction**

OCS also helps parents whose children are victims of international parental child abduction and ensures fulfillment of US treaty obligations relating to the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction.

#### **Other Family and Children's Issues**

The Office of American Citizen Services and Crisis Management provides protective services for American families living and traveling abroad, and assists with child custody, child support, child abuse, victims of crime, and other child protection services.

### **Nigeria Travel Warning**

In view of the ongoing kidnappings of hostages in the Niger Delta region, the US State Department released a new travel warning on Thursday August 24, 2006 for Americans faced with the need to travel in the region. Excerpts are reprinted here. (A separate **Warden Message** was released on Monday August 28, 2006 by the Lagos Consular Section, the full text of which appears on page 3):

The security situation in the Delta region has deteriorated significantly. Travel to the region remains very dangerous and should be avoided. On January 11, 2006, one American and three other expatriates aboard an oilfield service vessel were kidnapped off the coast of Bayelsa State.

In February, three American citizens and six other expatriates were kidnapped in the Niger Delta area and held until late March 2006. Over the last several months, the region has been subjected to a series of attacks on oil company facilities that may be coordinated and have resulted in the death of over twenty security personnel.

A militant group claiming responsibility for the recent kidnappings has made public threats against oil company employees and their families, demanding they leave the region. Since August 1, 2006, 12 expatriates have been kidnapped in or near the city of Port Harcourt. Most recently, on August 13, several expatriates were kidnapped from a popular public entertainment venue in that city. The previous kidnappings occurred on public roadways or at the facilities where the expatriates were employed.

The Department of State continues to warn US citizens of the dangers of travel to Nigeria. The lack of law and order in Nigeria poses considerable risks to travelers. Violent crime committed by ordinary criminals, as well as by persons in police and military uniforms, can occur throughout the country and tends to peak between November and January, during the holiday period.

(Full text available at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov))



### **DR Congo Travel Warning**

In the wake of violent clashes in Kinshasa and elsewhere following first-round presidential elections on July 30, 2006 in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the US Department of State released a travel warning on Thursday August 24, 2006 for Americans on the situation, excerpts of which are reprinted here:

The Department of State continues to warn US citizens against travel to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in light of recent unrest following the first round of the presidential elections. On August 21-22, there was sustained gunfire in the Gombe neighborhood of Kinshasa where many expatriates reside. Americans hearing gunfire near their home or workplace were advised to stay in an internal room and/or away from windows. This unrest resulted in cancelled flights as well as temporary closure of boat service to Brazzaville.

There is a potential for violence surrounding the presidential runoff elections scheduled for October 29, 2006, and until an elected government is installed.

Travelers to the DRC routinely experience difficulties at the airport and other ports of entry, such as temporary detention and demands by immigration and security personnel for unofficial "special fees." Visas are not available at ports of entry. All resident foreigners, including Americans, are required to register at the office of the *Direction Général de Migration* (DGM) in the *commune* of their place of residence.

Americans should avoid all public demonstrations and areas where crowds are gathered, exercise extreme caution, closely watch and listen for local and international news from reliable sources. Changes in security conditions may occasionally restrict the travel of US Mission personnel.

(Full text available at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov))

## AMERICAN CITIZEN SERVICES

### **New ACS Hours in Lagos**

Effective October 1, 2006, the Lagos American Services Unit will adjust operating hours as follows:

- Mon/Weds Friday 7:30-11am  
for passport applicants
- Tues/Thurs 7:30-11am  
for Reports of Birth
- Mon-Friday 7:30-11am  
for notary services

### **E-Passports debut in the US**

The Department of State began issuing Electronic Passports (e-passports) to the public on Monday, August 14, 2006. Consistent with globally interoperable specifications adopted by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), this next generation of the US passport includes biometric technology. A contactless chip in the rear cover of the passport will contain the same data as that found on the biographic data page of the passport (name, date of birth, gender, place of birth, dates of passport issuance and expiration, passport number), and will also include a digital image of the bearer's photograph.

The Department of State has employed a multi-layered approach to protect the privacy of the information and to mitigate the chances of the electronic data being skimmed (unauthorized reading) or eavesdropped (intercepting communication of the transmission of data between the chip and the reader by unintended recipients). Metallic anti-skimming material incorporated into the front cover and spine of the e-passport book prevents the chip from being skimmed, or read, when the book is fully closed; Basic Access Control (BAC) technology, which requires that the data page be read electronically to generate a key that unlocks the chip, will prevent skimming and eavesdropping; and a randomized unique identification (RUID) feature will mitigate the risk that an e-passport holder could be tracked. To prevent alteration or modification of the data on the chip, and to allow authorities to validate and authenticate the data, the information on the chip will include an electronic signature (PKI).

For more info visit <http://travel.state.gov>.



### **New Warden Message**

The Lagos Consular Section's American Citizen Services Unit released a new Warden Message on Monday August 28, 2006, principal excerpts of which are as follows:

The US Consulate has received credible information that, as of mid-August, there was an impending threat to attack and/or take hostages from the following areas:

- Intels camp, Kilometer 16, Aba Road
- Orlando Courts behind Hotel Presidential
- Prodeco Camp, Onne
- Wilbros Site II, Rumuolimeli
- Daewoo, Bonny Island, Rivers State
- Eket, Akwa Ibom State.

At this time, there is no information regarding when the threat may subside. The Consulate advises all American citizens to practice extreme caution in their daily activities and to avoid travel to the region. Americans in the area should limit their travel, particularly at night, and should avoid public venues whenever possible.

Americans should review their security procedures, remain vigilant to their surroundings, and report specific incidences of targeted violence to the US Consulate in Lagos at 01-261-0050. You may also email the Lagos Consular Section at: [lagoscons2@state.gov](mailto:lagoscons2@state.gov).

Americans are encouraged to read the Department of State's August 24, 2006 Travel Warning regarding travel to Nigeria (available online at [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/tw/tw\\_928.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_928.html)) and the Worldwide Caution announcement released on June 6, 2006 (available online at [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/pa/pa\\_1161.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa/pa_1161.html)).

US citizens in Nigeria are strongly encouraged to register with the Department of State online (see top of column 3) or in person at the US Embassy in Abuja or the Consulate General in Lagos, where additional information on travel and security in Nigeria is available.

### **Travel Registration: Here's how**

US citizens in Nigeria can access the Department of State's online travel registration service at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov). For all without computer access, you may still register in person at the U.S. Embassy in Abuja or the Consulate-General in Lagos. You will need to complete a registration form and present proof of U.S. citizenship (such as the biographic page of your US passport).



### **The US Foreign Agricultural Service** Lagos Office

The Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) at the US Consulate-General in Lagos represents the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in Nigeria. With regional responsibilities for both Nigeria and Ghana, FAS/Lagos offers a variety of services to US and Nigerian agribusiness companies, government & non-government entities involved in agricultural trade and development.



*Offshore Oil platforms in Nigerian waters*

### **The US Foreign Commercial Service** Lagos Office

The Foreign Commercial Service (FCS) at the US Consulate-General in Lagos represents the US Department of Commerce in Nigeria. FCS/Lagos assists small-to-medium sized US companies exporting to Nigeria and protects the business interests of US companies operating in the country. FCS/Lagos sponsors a number of conferences, seminars, and workshops each year for public and private sector officials from Nigeria and the US.



## IMMIGRANT VISAS

### USCIS New Orleans District Office Marks 1<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of Katrina

One year ago, shortly after massive flooding caused by Hurricane Katrina, US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) employees rushed into the storm damaged USCIS/New Orleans District Office and rescued the immigration files of more than 2000 aspiring immigrants. The files, representing months of paperwork and effort, were successfully recovered, enabling USCIS/New Orleans to continue day-to-day operations on behalf of immigration petitioners in the 3 Gulf Coast states most seriously affected by the storm (Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi).

Today, while the Gulf Coast struggles to rebuild, USCIS/New Orleans is nevertheless running at full speed—precisely because of those early efforts to maintain operations. Stella Jarina, Director of the USCIS New Orleans District, recalls that the scattering of people and files made it difficult to review cases, contact applicants, update records or even schedule interviews. “It was a monumental task,” recalled Jarina. “We had to find a way to reach our clients.” Even with communication channels restored, New Orleans’ immigrant population had dispersed throughout the United States. “It took a special effort by our officers and the US Postal Service to locate each of our customers and explain to them how to get their cases moving,” said Jarina. “At the same time, many of our officers had also been evacuated, had lost their homes and belongings, and were doing their work from neighboring states.”

Less than ten days after the storm hit, USCIS/New Orleans employees began working from a temporary location in Jackson, Mississippi where officials answered questions, offered guidance and hosted a naturalization ceremony for residents affected by the storm. It eventually became apparent that Katrina had irreparably damaged the old New Orleans District Office. On June 5, 2006 USCIS/New Orleans thus opened its new office in suburban Metairie, LA.



### More Using DNA to Prove Family Ties

The *Seattle Times* published an article on August 24, 2006 highlighting the growth of DNA testing in US immigration cases. According to the article, the US immigration officials are more frequently recommending DNA tests to aspiring immigrants from certain parts of the world where the sort of documentary or photographic evidence of relationships normally maintained by families in more developed countries is not readily available. As the article pointed out, “Immigration laws allow US citizens to petition to bring spouses, parents, children and siblings to the United States; green-card holders can sponsor spouses and unmarried children.”

The article continued, “The DNA test — done through a cheek swab — is often recommended for people from parts of Asia and Africa — in cases where fraud is suspected or where war or other political upheaval has left a country's public records in disarray, immigration officials say.”

This is borne out in the Lagos Consular Section, home to the largest US immigrant visa unit in sub-Saharan Africa. DNA testing is a common tool used in family-based immigration cases, especially when family members have been separated for a number of years and lack other evidence of family ties.

As the *Seattle Times* article pointed out, “Neither the US State Department, which operates the foreign embassies where visas are processed, nor the Department of Homeland Security's Citizenship and Immigration Services, which processes applications in the United States, keeps statistics on how often the tests are used.” The article further stipulated that DNA testing is always voluntary and is recommended only as a last resort. “A test could determine whether a petition lacking other strong proof of familial relationship, is successful. It also could determine whether final processing takes an additional three months or three years.”



### Kenya Breaks US Diversity visa scam

According to BBC and Agence France Press reports dated June 2, 2006, a visa fraud ring operating in the vicinity of the new United States embassy in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi has been broken up.

According to the reports, 77 suspects in the visa fraud ring were arrested when Kenyan police and US embassy authorities carried out a joint sting operation.

The BBC quoted unnamed officials as saying that the ringleaders paid winners of the US (Diversity) visa lottery to falsely claim they had dependents who would then be eligible to enter the US. The scam reportedly caused financial hardship to many families.

The AFP report stated that dozens of heavily armed policemen supported by plain-clothes officers converged on the area around the US Chancery in Nairobi's upmarket Gigiri district for the arrests. Kenyan officials told AFP that individuals and families people paid thousands of dollars to those running the scam in order to be paired up with bona fide lottery winners as bogus spouses and children.

### IV Demographic of the Month

#### US Citizen Naturalizations by Region (thousands)

	2005	2004	2003
<i>Total</i>	605	537	463
<i>Africa</i>	39	35	29
<i>Asia</i>	234	219	192
<i>Europe</i>	97	89	74
<i>North America</i>	181	151	139
<i>Total</i>			
<i>Oceania</i>	4	4	3
<i>South America</i>	45	39	34
<i>Other</i>	1	1	1

Source: USCIS

## NONIMMIGRANT VISAS

**DESTINATION USA**  
Secure Borders. Open Doors.

### Nigeria-US Travel Continues to Grow

Yr	Africa Total	S. Afr. Rank: 1	Nig. Rank: 2	Ghana Rank: 3
96	284	94	25	11
98	364	118	35	14
99	407	121	41	21
00	447	131	40	22
01	466	130	48	25
02	387	105	51	26
03	371	106	60	29
04	384	112	62	29
05	395	121	65	23

Source: USCIS

The table above displays new statistics on Non-Immigrant Admissions to the US (in thousands per year), recently released by the US Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)

As the above USCIS statistics show, non-immigrant admissions to the US from sub-Saharan African rose consistently from 1996 to 2001 (no figures are available for 1997), then declined substantially in the wake of the 9/11/2001 terrorist attacks in the US—as did US tourism in general. South Africans consistently outrank all others from the region in US tourism, but Nigerians just as consistently rank second.

However, Nigerians and Ghanaians—unlike nearly all other non-immigrant visitors—actually increased in number from 2001 to 2002. Moreover, Nigerian non-immigrant admissions to the US have continued to show strong growth. Whereas in 1996 only about 25% as many Nigerians as South Africans visited the US, by last year that figure surpassed 50%. The trend is clear: Nigeria-US travel is a growing phenomenon.



### Abuja Consular Section to begin processing Non-Immigrant Visas

The long-awaited start of Non-Immigrant Visa operations in Abuja is now at hand. Beginning on or about September 18, 2006, Non-Immigrant Visa applicants from throughout the Abuja consular district (comprising all of northern Nigeria) may apply for visas at the US Chancery in Abuja. As with applications processed in Lagos, Abuja visa application fees will have to be paid in advance at any of the designated UBA branches currently listed on the US Diplomatic Mission's website (see below). Readers are advised to stay tuned to the news media as more details are finalized.

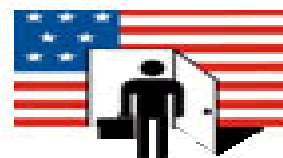
### REMINDER: UBA Payment Facilities

Effective July 2006, visa application fees must be paid in advance at designated UBA branches throughout Nigeria. Payment instruction and a list of these branches appears on the website of the US Diplomatic Mission to Nigeria where applicants make online visa interview appointments.

### REVIEW: Drop Box Guidelines

Non-immigrant visa applicants may renew business, tourist, student, exchange, crew, or temporary employment visas if the following conditions are met:

1. The visa to be renewed is a full-validity (24-month) multiple-entry visa **issued in Lagos**.
2. The visa is still valid or expired no more than 12 months ago.
3. The required application forms are completely filled. *Full details are available at [www.abuja.usembassy.gov](http://www.abuja.usembassy.gov).*



### Interview Appointments How long must I wait?

The US Department of State now publicly posts typical wait times for nonimmigrant visa interviews at US diplomatic/consular posts throughout the world.

As of the end of August 2006, current typical wait times for interview appointments in Lagos were as follows:

Visa Type	Calendar Days
Visitor	34
Student	34
Exchange Visitor	34
Other Nonimmigrant applicants	34

Readers should bear in mind that 2 business days are required for final processing/printing of visas for successful visa applicants (unless additional administrative processing is required).

Visa applicants may consult current wait times in Lagos (or any other US diplomatic / consular post) by visiting the following US Department of State website:

[http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/wait/tempvisitors\\_wait\\_result.php?post=Lagos&x=55&y=19](http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/wait/tempvisitors_wait_result.php?post=Lagos&x=55&y=19)

### Maersk House, Victoria Island



### **The Cowrie Creek Chronicle** **Recipe Of The Month**

#### Vegetable-Rice Pilaf

1¾ cups boiling water  
⅔ cup long grain rice  
1 cup loose-pack frozen cut broccoli  
¼ cup coarsely shredded carrots  
1 tbsp margarine or butter  
½ tsp salt  
¼ tsp dried thyme, crushed  
Dash pepper

In a glass oven-proof baking dish, combine boiling water, uncooked rice, broccoli, carrots, margarine, salt, thyme and pepper. Cover with divider tray. Place main dish of choice on top. Micro-wave cook on 100% power (high) for 25-30 minutes or until the rice and broccoli are tender. Let stand, covered, about 5 minutes. Carefully remove divider tray. Stir mixture before serving. Makes 4 servings.  
—from *Heat-A-Meal Recipes & Cooking Tips*

### **Photo of the Month**



**Church of the Assumption, Lagos**

This striking view of the Roman Catholic Church of the Assumption, located on busy Falomo Circle, Ikoyi, captures both the airiness of the building and its lively atmosphere almost any day or night of the week. Among the largest Roman Catholic parish communities in Nigeria, the Church of the Assumption serves thousands of Catholics, both Nigerians and expatriates, who populate the surrounding residential communities.

### **Ambassador Campbell lauds Nigeria's Peacekeeping efforts**

*Excerpts from Ambassador Campbell's remarks delivered August 21, 2006 in Abuja at the Defense Institute of International Legal Studies (DIILS) seminar, "Peacekeeping for Decision Makers"*

"The topic *Peacekeeping for Decision Makers* could not be more important given Nigeria's positive, indeed essential, role in promoting stability, democracy and good governance in this region, and throughout the world. Ethnic and religious conflict continues to result in humanitarian suffering of great magnitude throughout the world, as well in Africa. And, the decisions leaders make about Peacekeeping Operations often determine the success or failure of efforts to stem the suffering and displacement of millions of refugees. So, the topic of this seminar could not be more timely. And my government is proud to be associated with Nigeria's leadership role in peacekeeping. To cite only a few examples:

"Nigeria is playing an exemplary role in the efforts of the African Union and the international community to end the strife and bloodshed in Darfur.

"The Nigerian Armed Forces played a critical role in Peacekeeping Operations and the introduction of democracy in Liberia.

"Indeed, the Nigerian Military's superb efforts in maintaining peace and stability in Sierra Leone set the standard for Peacekeeping in the region.

"Nigerian troops have distinguished themselves by providing Peacekeeping support to Operations in Lebanon, Yugoslavia, Kuwait, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, Rwanda, and presently Sudan.

"And, no doubt, Nigeria will respond positively to future requests from the international community."

*Full text available at <http://abuja.usembassy.gov/>*

### **The Consular Section**

The U.S. Consulate General is committed to improving the visa application process and facilitating legitimate travel to the United States. The United States is a free and open society; we want the visa application process to be as transparent as possible. We welcome visitors who genuinely want to visit, study, and do business in the United States. We are dedicated to secure borders, open doors and the safety of U.S. citizens and visitors alike. Changes in visa procedures reflect these concerns and are not intended to hinder legitimate travel.

### **The Cowrie Creek Chronicle** **Submissions**

If you have interesting immigration, visa, naturalization and citizenship stories, please share them with readers. Email submissions to [lagoscons2@state.gov](mailto:lagoscons2@state.gov) attention: CCC. The editors welcome contributions, especially submissions in native Nigerian—or other—languages.

### **Questions**

If you have a question that you need urgently answered, please feel free to email us at [lagoscons2@state.gov](mailto:lagoscons2@state.gov) attention: CCC. We will be more than happy to publish your questions and our responses in *The Cowrie Creek Chronicle* on *The Editor's Page*.

### **Further Inquiries:**

Specific questions about individual visa cases may be directed to the U.S. Consulate General by emailing [lagoscons2@state.gov](mailto:lagoscons2@state.gov). General visa questions may be directed to the U.S. Department of State by emailing [usvisa@state.gov](mailto:usvisa@state.gov). Please indicate the subject of your inquiry on the subject line (e.g., student visa, visitor visa, worker visa, spouse visa, affidavit of support, etc.).